

CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE

AND

MISSIONARY WEEKLY.

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The Christian Alliance

AND

MISSIONARY WEEKLY.

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CONTENTS:

EDITORIALS—The Last Month; The Boston Convention; The Missionary Alliance; College Notes; Letter from Miss Bates.....	289-290
THE PULPIT—Bible, or God's Patience with His People's Failure.....	291-296
GENERAL ARTICLES—Friday Meeting; Conscientism; Outlook for Palestine; Amusements in the Churches.....	297-302
MISSIONARY PARAGRAPHS.....	303
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.....	303

✠ Editorial. ✠

The Last Month.

We are entering upon the last month of 1889, and the last days of the Decade. God help us to make the most of every moment, every opportunity, and even every trial of this last remnant of another year, and may the dying year bring the glad consciousness of finished work and God's accomplished will.

The Boston Convention.

We hope to meet many of the New England friends at Boston next week, December 10th to 12th at the Annual Convention of the Christian Alliance for Massachusetts. Let those who cannot go have a closet convention "in the secret place of the Most High," and the same cloud will fall and cover us all with His enfolding and uniting Presence.

* * *

The Missionary Alliance.

The International Missionary Alliance is now incorporated and its officers elected. Remittances should be sent to Mrs. E. M. Whittemore, Financial Secretary, No. 723 Park ave., New York, or David Crear, Treasurer, 237 West 105th St.

Rev. V. C. Hart, D.D., Corresponding Secretary, will communicate with any persons desiring information regarding to work. The other officers are E. G. Selchow, Chairman of Board; S. E. Whittemore, Vice-Chairman; A. B. Simpson, General Secretary, and H. A. Waterbury, Recording Secretary.

* * *

College Notes.

The Training College is steadily growing in interest and in influence. There are at present forty students, and others are still coming. They constitute one of the best classes in the College's history of six years.

The spirit of Jesus seems to pervade all the life of the Home, so that visitors coming in for a day

or even a brief time catch some of the overflow of blessing.

A theological student visits us occasionally to warm at our altar fires.

The students show themselves to be studious and eager for Scriptural knowledge.

Some of the pupils of the Greek classes meet at 5.30 a.m., for conversational study.

The members of Mr. Simpson's class have just completed an analytical study of Acts. There are many testimonies to the blessings received in this study.

Recently ten of the students participated in a profitable debate. Subject: "Resolved that Paul was more justifiable than Barnabas in his course respecting Mark." Both sides were well sustained by carefully prepared essays and speeches. The decision was in favor of the negative.

Thanksgiving Day was one of special blessings. Brother Funk led the morning devotions, reading Exodus 40: 34-38, from which he drew some beautiful lessons of God going before as the cloud, and of our duty to keep our eyes upon Him and follow where He leads. This suggested many notes of praise from the family circle. One brother a year ago had determined to spend his life on the stage. Six months of sickness broke his will and brought him into harmony with Jesus. Now he desires to carry the light of truth into Africa.

A sister within the past year was turned from an ambition to study law, to become a messenger of the Gospel of Peace. Another was led to put off his glasses since coming to the College, and now sees by Him who "formed the eyes."

Many spoke of the clear leading of God in bringing them to the College, and of the showers of blessing received within its hallowing walls.

The Thanksgiving sermon by Pastor Simpson gave additional stimulus and cause for gratitude to our gracious Father for His love and care for the past year.

A sumptuous dinner, provided by a beloved friend and trustee of the College, Brother Conley of Pittsburg, was heartily enjoyed with thankfulness by all, and especially the tender greeting, Jude 24-25, sent by telegraph from the same brother, his wife and the Misses Bird, two of our students who were then at home. The following message was sent in reply, Matt. 15: 37: 1 Chron. 12: 18, middle clause.

In the afternoon the students were invited to Berachah Orphanage where all were much blessed by the exercises of the children, and the address

of Brother Simpson, Brother Funk, Mrs. Schultz, Miss Dunn and others. Many helpful lessons were learned by the visitors from the beautiful life of trust exemplified in this work.

The evening praise service in the Tabernacle was continued by the students and some friends in the College parlors. Song, testimony and prayer were precious, and prolonged until 12 o'clock, and all realized the quiet tenderness of the blessed Spirit.

Brother and sister Schultz and Brother Funk are beloved by all, and for the wisely chosen heads for so large a household.

In them we find true and safe counsellors and helpers in all that pertains to our highest good.

Our home and hearts have been the brighter by having with us for a few weeks Rev. S. E. Mills and wife and two sweet children. They will sail soon for Hayti where all hearts and prayers will follow them.

COMMUNICATED.

Miss Carrie Bates Writes from Berar, India.

I work some through an interpreter, and am able to do a very little in Marathi. Last evening our Marathi meeting was a wonderful one, the spirit was present in mighty power and several confessed their need of a Saviour and their desire to lead a Christian life. There are numbers of people here under deep conviction, who have not as yet had the courage to forsake all for Christ. It would mean separation from their families and much persecution, but we believe the Lord will bless and lead souls to Himself. I hope this week to start a weekly meeting with the Christian women and girls, shall be obliged at first to speak largely through an interpreter.

One of our native Christians was bitten by a snake two weeks since, and died in a few hours. Charms often try to bring people to life, by boring holes in their heads and doing other horrible things. * * * I love this people very much.

Heathen soil is yielding to faithful telling, the blessed seed has not been cast in vain. Words of promise fly across every ocean. People of every land are touched by the healing waters which are flowing so freely from ten thousand churches. The very air is full of the great message. The news of souls turning from sin to righteousness, from idols to Christ, prompt our hearts to greater efforts.

"I love this people very much," is the message which comes from Africa, India, China and all the heathen world. Love is the beginning and end of all true effort for souls. May the Lord give unto His people that love which "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

The Pulpit

IN THE SCHOOL OF FAITH.

Elijah; or God's Patience with His People's Failures.

"Elijah was a man subject to like passions with us" is the last commentary of the New Testament on the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. Instead of dwelling on the strength of his character, the Holy Ghost would specially call our attention to the infirmities of his faith. It would seem as if God would have us remember, not so much the greatness of human character, as its helplessness, and dwell rather on the greatness of His grace, magnified by our very frailties and failures. A life so illustrious as the Prophet of Fire, is apt to become a snare to others, leading us rather to look at the man than his Master, and overshadowing our commonplace lives by the grandeur of his attainments. God has therefore allowed the most illustrious of His saints to fail in their strongest qualities; that we may "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils," and learn the sufficiency of God from His transcendent grace, as shown most conspicuously in the weaknesses of His people. Perhaps more hearts have been helped by David's recovery, Peter's restoration and God's patience with Elijah in his ignominious failure, than by all the glorious triumphs of these eminent servants of God.

Let us review the story of Elijah therefore, not so much with reference to the sublime attainments of his faith as to the lessons which God would teach us through his weakness and the grace which restored him.

I. HIS TRIUMPHANT FAITH.

Elijah appears upon the scene of Hebrew history like a meteor flash. We have no record of his birth or childhood and no trace of the development of the life of faith and the sacred fire of prophetic inspiration. A child of the wilderness, like John the Baptist, his character was moulded in solitary communion with nature and God, and developed those stern and rugged qualities which peculiarly fitted him for the ministry of judgment to which he was specially called. Like a lightning stroke he falls across the path of the wicked Ahab and with a formula of prophetic introduction peculiar to himself, proclaims in the name of Jehovah, the long-forgotten God of the Israelites

the beginning of a period of judgment which is soon to leave the land a blighted scene of desolation; and then as suddenly he disappears, and for the years that follow no trace is found of him, although eagerly sought by the troubled king in every corner of the land. Such an apparition so terribly, followed by the threatened judgment, was enough to stamp his figure on the minds of all succeeding ages. Such a message and such a ministry required and exhibited the highest faith. It implied a confidence in God and a courageous disdain of man worthy of the loftiest examples of heroic faith. It stands, for sublimity, with Joshua's command to the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and Hezekiah's prayer that the dial should be arrested fifteen degrees in the advance of the heavens. The Apostle James implies that this bold act was the result of much earnest prayer and that he did not dare thus to stand before the king and the world and in the name of God hold back the laws of nature, without having first received the answering word from heaven on which true faith must always rest and act.

In this he is an example to us of the faith which stands in courageous boldness against surrounding evil, and claims, from heaven, perhaps not the judgments of a former dispensation, but the overruling power and providence of God for the glory of His name and the interests of His kingdom.

But we next see Elijah's faith in a new aspect, viz., in dependence on God for his own needs and the needs of those dependent upon him in those days of fiery trial.

First, we find him at the little brook in the wilderness, fed by ravens and dependent on God for his daily bread, with a trust which has oft since encouraged the struggling and needy saints of God. Next, we see his faith exposed to a keener pressure, when he is required by the Lord to take the last handful of meal and drop of oil from the starving widow and her child. It is easier to suffer want ourselves than to see others suffer on our account and trust the Lord, not only for them but for ourselves. This God required from Elijah and he in turn required of the widow of Zarephath that she should so learn the lesson of trust also that she could give her last crumb to the servant of God. Thus it was that the daily miracle began, and the little household at Zarephath became examples of what has so often since been proved in the homes of the poor, that "better is a little in the fear of the Lord, than great riches" without His blessing.

At length one step of faith leads to a higher; we never trust God for a little thing but He honors us by letting us receive a greater. And so the faith of Elijah and the widow for their daily bread is at length honored in the most stupendous miracle of human history hitherto; the raising of her lifeless boy from the dead. Little do we dream when we begin to trust God for little things that these are stepping-stones on which we are treading to higher glories and victories, not only in this life but in the ages to come, when the lessons of faith we are learning to-day, shall be exemplified on a grander theatre and a sublimer scale. This glorious miracle, which was also given in answer to prayer, might well prepare the mighty prophet for the great test which was immediately to follow.

And so his faith is next tried on the grandest occasion and the most majestic exhibition of Old Testament history. Suddenly appearing before the king, he summons him and his people to meet him on Mount Carmel, for a decisive trial of the great question between God and Baal. The summons is met by an extraordinary convocation, the people coming together in tens of thousands. The eight hundred prophets and priests of Baal and the king himself are all there on the one side, and Elijah alone on the other. The test which he proclaims is simply and absolutely fair. Every advantage is given to the other side; the representatives of Baal are allowed to begin and the entire day is given to them for the purpose of proving their claims and obtaining some answering token from their idols. At length when the evening shades begin to gather and they have ignominiously failed in every attempt and tried in vain, by cries and mutilations to bring some answer from their gods, Elijah dismisses them with contempt and steps forward to claim the answer of Jehovah. His appeal is a very simple one. The old altar of former years is prepared, the bleeding sacrifice is laid upon it. To make the test doubly difficult, a deep trench is dug on every side and the water is poured over the altar and trenches until they are flooded in every direction. Then he lifts his eyes to heaven and addresses his simple prayer. It is but a few sentences; he calmly asks Jehovah to vindicate Himself and His prophet and make the people understand that He is God. There is no strain or pleading; this has already been done. His faith is so confident that it needs but speak his request.

His words have scarcely ceased, when suddenly

the gathering twilight is lighted up with the quivering flash of heavenly fire; the altar is ablaze with the devouring flame; the hissing tongues of lambent fire lick up the water in the trenches, while a strange awe and stillness holds the breath of the amazed spectators; and then there comes the tumultuous re-action and a great shout rises up from every side, prolonged and repeated from rank to rank, and echoed back from Carmel's rocks and caves again and again; a shout which seems almost to repeat Elijah's own name, "Jah Eli," "Jehovah, He is God." But Elijah does not lose his self-command for a moment. The trial is over, the verdict is announced, the people have turned back to their God but the judgment is now to be revoked, and so, speaking again in the language of audacious faith, he proclaims to the king that the heavens are about to open, and the clouds to burst, and bids him prepare for his journey, "for there is a sound of abundance of rain."

There was as yet no sound, save in the prophet's ear, and the only sound that he had heard was the sound of the people's shout and the anticipations of his own faith. But faith always speaks its message before sense confirms it. And so Elijah hastens to his watch-tower to press upon Jehovah the claim which he has already announced and to wait for the first signal. There, bowed down before God, with his face between his knees in the attitude of a travelling mother, he agonizes in the prayer of the Spirit. It is working out in him his own great purpose, it is the effectual, energizing prayer, the faith which knows in his own inmost being that God is working in the realm of His providence. So real does it appear to him, that he feels that there must be some cloud upon the sky and he sends his servant again and again to report; but there is none. But the ear of faith cannot be deceived, the faith of God cannot be a lie; something must give way when the Holy Ghost thus prays. And so he waits and prays, not in the agony of doubt, but in the triumphant energy of power, and at last, the seventh time, when the process of faith is accomplished the message comes, "There is a cloud like a man's hand upon the sky." Was it a fitting emblem of the hand of Elijah which was moving the heavens, or was it the hand of Jesus which his hand had grasped? It is enough at least, and springing to his feet he hastens back to the king and bids him at once depart for his palace; while girding up his loins he dashes on before like a victorious captain leading the triumphal march of a nation, while

the heavens are black with clouds and the floods of rain would have even filled the people with alarm, had they not been too full of gladness and gratitude to be appalled, even by the wildest fury of the tempest.

Up to the gates of Jezreel the enthusiastic prophet sped. There he halted while Ahab hastened in. His victory was complete, his faith was vindicated; what need that he should go further? Ah, was not this the moment of danger? Can we help regretting that he did not pass through those gates and face that defiant queen who alone remained unconquered, but whose imperious will was the real barrier of adamant, against which the whole battle was directed? Was not this the one unfinished battle, the one of fatal omission? Was there perhaps, for the first time, one thought of timidity, one cowardly impulse, one procrastinating dream, that the rest could be finished on the morrow? At least we know, that ere the morrow's sun had risen, the desperate spirit of the queen had met the tide of rebellion with victorious defiance, and even Elijah himself, was fleeing back like a wave from the adamantine shore, and all the work of his life apparently undone. Truly there is no hour so full of peril as the hour of triumph, and wisely has some one sung,

"If conqueror of tomorrow's fight, beware;
If conquered, for tomorrow's fight prepare."

II. ELIJAH'S FAILURE.

It was as sudden and complete as his triumph had been bold and startling. There was an entire re-action, and the man of flint and fire was broken as a potter's vessel and feeble as a fretting child. One fierce, defiant word from Jezebel, gleaming like the savage lightning, and threatening with a doom as swift and terrible as her murdered prophets before another sun had set, hurled him in a moment from the pinnacle of triumph to the depths of agonising terror, and "he arose and went for his life." One thought alone took possession of the paralyzed prophet, to flee and save himself. And, yet, when he gets beyond her reach and sinks exhausted in the desert, with a strange inconsistency of weakness and fear, he actually asks that he may die. If this was what he wanted he had an excellent chance to do it nobly in Samaria. What sad work the devil can make of poor humanity when God lets us go for an instant! After poor Elijah, no heart need ever feel discouraged.

Why did he fall? Was it because he did not go far enough and finish his work with Jezebel's destruction too? Perhaps so, and if so, it is another

solemn lesson of the peril of the half finished work of faith and obedience which stops within a fraction of the fulness of God's will. Or was it because he depended too much on the effect of God's judgment and was disappointed to find that after all the spirit of human pride and wickedness was still unchanged? Or was it more than all this, because Elijah had allowed his own self-consciousness to assume too high a place, and like Simon Peter, had to fall in order to experience the death of self. Was Elijah a little in his own way, as Jonah afterward was in the way of another of the prophets of the Lord? It must have been so. That bitter cry, "I am no better than my fathers," lets out the secret. He seems astonished to find his own weakness. He had never been "any better than his fathers" even in the height of his triumph, and it was only the grace of God in him that accomplished what it did. But somehow, he must have become absorbed in his own greatness and got in God's way so much that he had to be humiliated and slain, and then with the deeper lesson of self-crucifixion, sent back to finish his work. Is not this the secret of almost all our failures and has not God decreed that he that trusteth in man shall ever fall until he learn to lean, not upon Elijah, but upon Elijah's God. And so we are led to

III. HIS RESTORATION.

First, notice the gentleness of God in picking up and setting on his feet once more His broken child. He saw that part of his desperate collapse was due to physical causes; his body and brain had been under a tremendous strain for days and even years, and looking away for a moment from God the pressure had become too great. And so the first thing that God does is to rest him and nurse him like a sick and weary child; He puts him to sleep under the juniper tree and then gently wakes him and feeds his weary body. Then He bids him rise again and waking him once more, makes him eat again of the heavenly meal before he sets out on his journey across the desert.

How kindly God cares for our bodies as well as our spirits and how often He says to His fretted children, "Come ye apart and rest awhile," and gently strengthens them and refreshes them before sending them forth to bear the heavy burdens of life. He who was moved with compassion for the hungry multitudes and who Himself suffered hunger and was sorely tempted by the devil, still knows the frailty of our frame and ministers to our bodies as well as to our spirits.

Next we notice how God takes His child apart with Himself to the desert for a while and there talks with him and teaches him the lessons which he needs to learn. So often He calls us aside from our work for a season and bids us be still and learn ere we go forth again to minister. Especially is this so when there has been some serious break, some sudden failure and some radical defect in our work. There is no time lost in such waiting hours. Fleeing from his enemies the ancient knight found that his horse needed to be reshod. Prudence seemed to urge him on without delay, but higher wisdom taught him to halt a few minutes at the blacksmith's forge by the way to have the shoe replaced, and although he heard the feet of his pursuers galloping hard behind, yet he waited those minutes until his charger was refitted for his flight, and then, leaping into his saddle just as they appeared a hundred yards away, he dashed away from them with the fleetness of the wind, and knew that his halting had hastened his escape. So often God bids us tarry ere we go, and fully recover ourselves for the next great stage of the journey and work.

But again, God speaks to His servant and sets him thinking and examining his own heart and life. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" God's best way of teaching us is to ask us questions and God is asking many of us "what doest thou here?" Elijah was not very ready to listen to the question and was too quick to answer in the words of hasty vindication, as we so often are. Let us pause and think whether we are where God wants us fully, especially if there be in our life some great and serious failure. If our faith and courage have given way, and we have gone back in any way from our trust, let us not be too ready to blame our enemies or reflect upon our God and vindicate ourselves, but see if there is not something lacking with us and some lesson God tenderly waits to teach us.

But next, we notice, very distinctly, the lesson which God insisted on having His prophet learn. This great self-conscious "I" must be slain and Elijah must learn that he is by no means the only faithful follower of Jehovah in Israel and not at all indispensable to the great work which he supposes has all been resting on his shoulders; and so God tells him that there are seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal or in any way compromised their testimony and dishonored their God, and that He has abundant instruments besides him through whom he can

work; and so he concludes by sending him to call three of these instruments to finish the work which he had begun and left so sadly unfinished.

One of these is Hazeal, the King of Syria, a foreign soldier whom God can use at his pleasure to fulfill his purposes and punish his wicked people. Another is Jehu, an unknown captain in the army of Ahab, who is to succeed him as king in a little while. And a third is a humble ploughman in the fields of Samaria, who is to be Elijah's servant and successor and in his life and quiet ministry, to accomplish much more in the destruction of idolatry and the establishing of God's kingdom than even Elijah himself. All this must have humbled him in the dust and made him feel how easy it was for God to take him at his word and let him die, if need be, and have others arise at God's bidding and accomplish His unfailing purposes. How infinite are God's resources, and how insignificant any one of His instrumentalities in itself! And so God cannot use us much until we learn that if He does use us at all, it is not because of our importance, but His great condescension in permitting us to be workers together with Him. No man is of much account in God's service until he learns not to place much value on himself. It was an awful stripping of the greatest of the prophets but it was indispensable for him to learn and us to be taught by him this great lesson. His work did not cease; he went forth from Horeb to many years of honored service and passed at length with unparalleled honor and glory to his great reward; but his work henceforth was more quiet and noiseless and he himself was out of sight. So that even his translation to heaven, with all its majestic surroundings was almost entirely withdrawn from the gaze of man and would have been, even from Elisha's, had not the latter insisted upon witnessing it. Henceforth Elijah's death was over, and his funeral past, and there only awaited his translation. It was worth all the humiliation of the desert to learn this lesson.

But again, God taught him in his restoration the insufficiency of mere judgment and all the influences of law and terror to change and purify the human heart and the need of that gentler dispensation of Divine grace and spiritual power which was to follow his own fiery ministry, in the spirit and work of Elisha, and which was, at a later period, to be introduced in all its fulness by the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Elisha was to be a special type. And so God takes him through a sort of panorama in the cave of Horeb which

was designed to symbolize this special truth.

All the terrific forces of nature pass before him, the symbols of his own fiery spirit and God's most awful judgments. The earthquake first shakes the solid ground and heaves the mountains from their bases, yawning gulfs burst open at his feet and avalanches of rocks are hurled into the chasm below, while the mountain and the desert heave like the swelling sea and the sickening roar of the awful convulsion of nature comes from the depths of the earth and the caves of the mountains. Unmoved, and perhaps defiant, he feels that the Lord is not in the earthquake. Then after a pause of fearful stillness such as precedes the outburst of the hurricane, the whirlwind follows. The heavens grow black as midnight, the fiery lightnings cleave the inky clouds and the thunders rise above the earthquakes' roar; like a giant arm, the tempest strikes the forests and sweeps them as the scythe of the mower; the very rocks are torn from their lofty bases and hurled into the abysses; the desert sand is caught up in great clouds to meet the denser masses of the sky, the giant hand of the storm gathers in its fists the mingled column of cloud and sand and rocks and trees, and hurls it along as projectiles from the cannon's mouth; sweeping from its track everything that resists, leaving a path of wreck and desolation; while the mingled roar and shriek of the warring elements and the terrified creatures of the earth and air blend in an indescribable chorus of terror and sublimity. The prophet himself has to cling to the rock for security or perhaps throw himself upon the ground to escape being swept away. But his spirit is still unmoved and the Lord is not in the whirlwind.

The phenomenon that follows is not particularly described farther than it is called the fire, but we know it must have been something that would worthily cap the climax, and appear yet mightier and more terrific than either the earthquake or the whirlwind. Perhaps it was an awful display of electric wonders, a play of lightning and thunders such as sometimes follows the first fury of the wind and lasts often for hours, in which the whole heaven seems to be one mass of flame and the earth sends up to meet it a ceaseless fire of electric artillery, until the whole air seemed to melt with fervent heat and the thunder bolts of heaven fall like the fire of innumerable batteries. An eastern sky can produce a thunder storm that might well be called a rain of fire. Or it may have been a display, more supernatural, in which the

very blaze of the same fiery tongues that had fallen on the sacrifice on Carmel, or on the rebellious company of Dathan and Abiram, or the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or afterwards in the ministry of Elijah himself upon the soldiers who came to take him captive. At least we may be sure it was a display of surpassing magnificence and awful terror. It was a peculiar manifestation of the angry judgment of Jehovah which shall at last destroy the wicked. But even this Elijah felt, perhaps to his own astonishment, had no effect on his spirit. In the heat of the desperate bitterness of his soul the Divine judgment could not move him, and he found, it may be for the first time, that the human heart can look upon the very terrors of Jehovah's judgment and yet remain as hard as ever. This is the most awful fact in human experience, that the judgments of God do not change men's hearts. The terrors of Sinai did not save Israel from their carnival of idolatry before the month was past. The repeated judgments of God upon His ancient people did not hold them back from the grossest idolatry. The unparalleled horrors to which the Hebrew race have been exposed for eighteen centuries, have not made them Christians. Nor will the very punishment of the Judgment Day and the eternal torments of an everlasting hell; but the lips of sinners will curse back again in answer to their judgments and the ages of eternity will doubtless increase the wickedness and malignity of the lost. All this begins to dawn upon Elijah as he feels his own spirit unmoved by the manifestations that have passed by.

And now the time has come for God to reveal to him the true secret of power. The elements are hushed, an awful stillness falls upon the scene, and out of the midst of it comes a voice faint as a whisper of the gentlest breeze, or probably a voice which falls perhaps on his own ear one of those deep strange instincts of unutterable quietness and yet deepest tenderness; a thrill which reaches his inmost being, woos his spirit into adoration and brings to his whole consciousness a sense of God and His ineffable presence and glory; a something which penetrates every fibre of his being, which melts his heart into tenderness and his spirit into submission, until he gathers his mantle around him and goes into his cave to hear the voice which alone can satisfy and fill his being.

This is the power which alone can affect the hearts of men, God Himself. Elijah feels it in his inmost being and now he knows how little worth are all his denunciations and strokes of punishment, without the spirit of the Holy One to move upon the hearts of men.

And so he is prepared in a measure for the announcements which are immediately to follow, bidding him to appoint two men as the messengers of judgment, but especially the third who is to be

the prophet of grace, whose very name signifies the salvation of God, and who is the type of Jesus Christ and His ministry of love. Elijah was a John the Baptist; Elisha, the good Physician and the gentle Teacher of Galilee. Elijah was the axe and the flame, which cleared the forest; Elisha, the Sower and the gentle rain and sunshine that nurtured the seed. Elijah was the winter frost that withered the false growth of centuries, but Elisha, the spring time of a better age, with its blossoms and fruits of life and righteousness.

But even Elisha was but a type and shadow of a greater than he, who has come to baptize with the Holy Ghost and to enable poor, weak, lost men, in His strength, to fulfill the righteousness which the law could show, but could not give. Thank God, we live in that better age and have that heavenly voice enshrined, through the indwelling Comforter, in the sanctuary of our hearts! Let us not forget Elijah's lesson, both in the struggle with our own spirits and the principles of our work for the salvation of men and the elevation of society. This is the vital principle of Christianity, which is a work of grace and not of judgment, of the Divine Spirit and of God Himself, and not the struggles and efforts of human nature.

The last lesson taught Elijah in his recovery and taught also to all future ages, is the all-sufficiency of God and the wretched insufficiency of the best of men. Elijah's failure had magnified the grace of Elijah's God, while it had minified Elijah himself. Henceforth men could realize that the weakest and most helpless of instruments could accomplish the mightiest purposes through the grace which is as free to the feeblest saint as to the mightiest prophet. This is especially the lesson that we need to learn. The God of Elijah is our God, and the grace which he received is offered freely to every one of us in the measure of our need and our trust. There is nothing that God has ever done for any ransomed saint, which He is not willing to do for any other who will trust Him and glorify Him. Elijah has passed away, but Elijah's God remains. Elijah's faith, even for a season vanished, but Elijah's God changed not. Oh, how blessed to know that when our teachers and friends are withdrawn, and even when our own faith fails us, there is One who changes not, and whose faithfulness survives the frailties of our nature and holds us in everlasting arms.

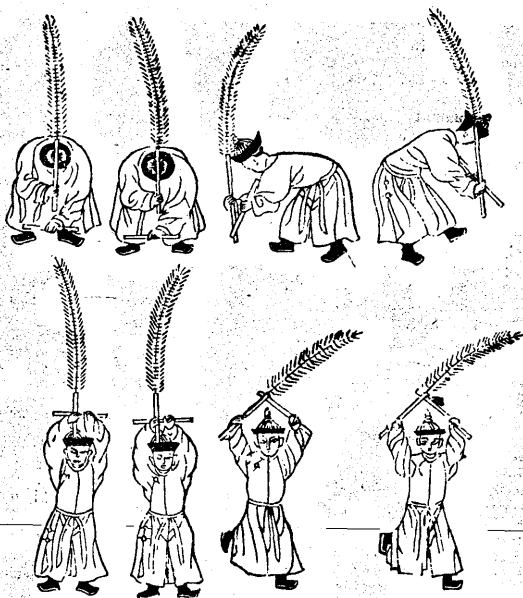
Let us go forth with the watchword of Elisha, when his master had disappeared from his view, but his master's God still remained, crying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and we shall find that, for all our need and work, Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

Friday Meeting—New York.

The address was founded on the 5th chapter of 1st Peter, from the 6th to the 10th verses. Four hands were spoken of in connection with these

verses. The first was the hand that is on us, that is God's hand. There are many pressures that He permits to come upon us that good may come of them. This will always follow if they are yielded to with meekly bowed head. When we can say "Thy will be done" to every thing, and are willing for all that God sends, we can have faith. Love comes before faith. The reason we do not get the blessing we are longing for is often because we are not ready for it. We would get exalted over it and spoiled. The sweetest joy in Christian life is to have a chastened spirit, and God is taking the best way to give it to us. The second hand is the one that is under us and holds us up, then we can cast all our care upon Him. There is a beautiful distinction in the tense of the two verbs here. The first is the Greek, Aorist, meaning that at a certain fixed time we did cast our care, then we have no business to be carrying any now. The next is the progressive present. He is always caring for us. Once for all we cast our care. He is caring all the time. Sometimes when we ask Him to carry our burdens He refuses, for they are not His burdens, and we should not even pray over them. They are the devil's burdens and should be cast off. The third hand is the devil's band. We must not expect God to bind Satan's power. We must be sober, or as the ancient fathers expressed it, have ever a recollected spirit. Don't take everything by appearances. Don't pray over everything you feel like praying about. Be sure the Lord is bidding you to pray and not the devil. He is after your faith. Stand off and don't parley with him. The fourth hand is the hand of the Master and Teacher, He will make us perfect, mature, and complete in character. He exercises us with trials so as to make us strong. The power of will is the power of spiritual life. Some wills are decided, but not full of force. There is a languidness about them that takes away their power. God wants to give us force, so that when we pray the devil will feel it in every nerve. He would settle us also in our faith, make it deep as well as broad. Like the pine tree whose tap root extends down as far as its branches shoot upward, we should get grounded away down in the centre of grace, so there will be no danger of a serious tumble.

The testimony meeting partook largely of the nature of the Thanksgiving season, and many notes of praise were given for the goodness of God during the year. A lady testified to healing from a trouble with her eyes, and for the immediate healing of her husband from a difficulty which threatened to be serious. Another lady testified to having been cured of a cough two years ago, but it had returned this fall. After prayer however, it had again disappeared. A sister spoke of having discovered an unlovely trait in her character which discouraged her for a time till the Lord said to her, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory." Then she saw her victory was not to be attained unto, but received as a gift, and she took it and had been resting quietly in it.



A GROUP OF PANTOMIMERS.

CONFUCIANISM.

BY V. C. HART, D. D.

CHAPTER IX.

The Liturgy.

While there are a great number of prostrations and mute actions connected with the rendering of the regular liturgical service, the music is considered a chief attraction. However low the present musical attainments of the Chinese may be, they have great faith in these peculiar instruments which represent every resonant sound known to them, and look back with much pride to those days when men's hearts were softened, and the most ferocious beasts were tamed by the strains extracted from just such clumsy instruments, as are pointed out to me upon the Moon terrace.

The lutes and lyres are immense, and when a professional sits down to either, the most delicate tones are produced. There are men who devote all their time and talents to the rendering of a few plaintive pieces upon them.

One has said that, "eight centuries before the existence of the son of Antiope, and of the famous singer of Thrace, it is recorded that the inimitable Kwei said to the Emperor Chun." "when I touch the stones, which compose my *King*, and make them send forth a sound, the animals range themselves around me and leap for joy."

The ancient music, according to Chinese writers of every age, "Could call down spirits from the ethereal regions; raise up the manes of desperate beings; inspire men with the love of virtue, and lead them to the practise of their duty." There are a number of praise songs which have been used at different times to extol the virtues of Con-

fucius which I must omit. The two which are given represent the attitude of the worshippers to the great teacher, and show very conclusively that from the Emperor down there is the most servile obedience to their sage.

We shall see that the worshippers have perfect faith in the virtue of their musical service, even to the extent of bringing the spirit of Confucius down to the feast prepared for him. I have no doubt that the scholars of China, firmly believe that in some mysterious manner he is really present during the time of worship.

The following song which is sometimes used, was accepted by a special decree in 1647. It was no doubt in use many centuries before that date, but not in the Canon by Imperial Mandate.

It consists of six verses of thirty-two characters each. The first verse is called Hsien, and is acted and chanted by the whole orchestra, after the spirit of Confucius has been invoked by the officiating scholar.

HSIEN.

O how great was the perfect sage!
Exalted were his virtues, merits vast.
Thou the diffuser of literature and reformer of morals,
To thee all kings shall come and do reverence.
Thy precepts are everywhere the standard,
And they do illumine this Imperial palace.
Here are sacrificial vessels of purest kind,
And the awe-inspiring drum and bell.

LING.

Enlightener of the Emperor and his people,
The pattern handed down from former sages.
Exalted mountain, O how lofty!
How can we attain such heights?
The ceremonies are perfect and music harmonious,
The sacrificial vessels are perfectly pure.
And are in accord with antiquity's pattern,
Even after usage the thrice-poured wine.

ANG.

O how perfect the holy teacher!
Of illustrious endowments, gifts of Heaven.
A wooden-tongued bell for all ages,
And perfect example to officials.
Clear is the wine and of purest kind,
Look upon the holders of the feathery plumes.
Let great peace endure forever,
And superior men be raised to high stations.

KING.

He was a moral king, O how great!
The true course of all things by him was declared.
Upward we gaze, and lo, he is before us,
His spirit is present in this place.

The wine is poured into the golden jars,
It is both clear and sweet.
Now we the offering make, the sacrifice is complete,
Yet how dare we rejoice in the service done.

HSIEN.

O precious fountain, deep and limpid pool,
Oh! exalted one, how very dreadful.
Pleased thou art with our offerings sage of transform-
ing doctrines.
In like manner are the ten Wise Ones.
Beat now the golden drums and resound the bells,
Declare the feast brought to an end.
The skein of service is now complete,
To thee thou great Exemplar of Yao and Shun.

HSIEN.

How resplendent is this palace of learning,
The whole world comes to render thee homage.
Thou fashioner and guide of elder sons,
I (Emperor) am a person of no importance.
But consider thou my many noble scholars,
Who serve with such great merit.
Let my reign be one of great peace,
Tributes once in three years and vassals once in five
may come.

The song used in every Confucian temple throughout China is nearly the same as the above in construction, but differs widely in its quotations from the ancient classics. It is performed in Nanking twice each year—spring and fall—by an orchestra of thirty-six singers, thirty-six musicians, and thirty-six harlequins or actors.

While the great sacrifice goes on, this remarkable song, consisting of one hundred and ninety-two characters, is played, sung, and acted at intervals. China's classic lore has surrendered its choicest gems to enrich this song, and her musical talent has exhausted its domain to meet the requirements of the occasion. Praise songs existed more than three thousand years ago, and were performed with instrumental music upon state occasions. Confucius said, "I returned from Wei to Lu and the music was reformed, and the imperial panegyrics were rectified, so that each had its proper place."

The moral influence of music was held in high estimate by the ancients, its educational effects were considered to be very great. The Master told his disciples that a man destitute of philanthropic feelings had nothing to do with music. He had great reverence for the simple strains of antiquity. Simplicity was his watchword.

"The men of ancient times in matters of etiquette and music were plain, while at the present

day in music and etiquette they are fine gentlemen; I follow the ancients in such things."

The admiring sons of the sage have followed his instructions and have kept to the good old orthodox ways. Instruments of same pattern as were thrummed in China when the early shepherds of Chaldaea played to their flocks, are found in Confucian temples. The same strains which delighted the philosopher when on earth, are now used to enchant his spirit from above. While he indulges mortals for a brief moment with his presence at his feast, strains of music fill his temple, then his soul is dismissed to the unknowable Heaven, wafted by music, Heaven's great gift to man.

At Nanking we have a most beautiful and valuable collection of instruments.

The marshal's baton is of satin figured with costly velvet. There are fifteen kinds of instruments, three bells, one very large, two drums, the magnificent *Ku* crowned with a phoenix. There are immense lutes and lyres, of numberless strings. There are six wind instruments, some of them very curious. Besides there are cymbals, and two peculiar instruments to start and stop the orchestra.

The rendering of so much music, and the acting of the 192 characters by the dancers, who hold pheasant feathers, and small reeds with six orifices each, is without doubt, about as complex a service as the human mind is able to execute.

In the execution of the following song 384 different positions are taken by the dancers or harlequins, while one character is sung two positions are assumed. Whose imagination but that of a Chinaman's could invent such a number of mute actions!

PRaise sONg.

CHAO.

O! how great was Confucius,
Preeminent in wisdom and first in knowledge.
With Heaven and Earth he forms a trinity,
He is the teacher of all mankind.
He was the fulfilment of a lucky omen, a unicorn to
take away evil,
Let the golden chords in harmony resound.
And sun and moon take up the strains,
For he is pure as Heaven and Earth.

SIEN.

We forever cherish his illustrious merits,
Which are like to symphonies of gems and gold.
Among mortals never was one like him born,
O! how wonderful the Great Perfection.
The ancient chargers and sacrificial tables are here,
For spring and autumn feasts.
Here is purest wine already poured out,
And its fragrance now ascends.

CHIH.

The rites are now performed without a fault,
And we again ascend to the hall and offer the sacrifices.
Drums and bells in harmony sound,
Faultless are the wine jars and vessels of clay.
O how dreadful, yet how condescending,
Praise to his eminence and accomplishments.
His ceremonies were transforming and his music
corrupt,
And in them are manifest his high merit.

SU.

Of old, yea in ancient days,
Our forefathers gave us the example.
Skin caps and sacrificial viands,
How harmonious was their music.
Only as Heaven could instruct the people,
Just so in time opportune was given the sage.
The social relations to set in order,
Even to this time he is a resounding bell.

YL.

The ancient wise men had the saying,
Blessed are those who sacrifice after the pattern.
His college halls are in all places,
Who shall dare to be irreverent.
The ceremonies are finished, we proclaim and remove
the sacrifices,
Be not careless dello them not.
Our music is the gift of Heaven,
And our pulse is from the plain of Chung Yuon.

TEH.

He is like the mountains Fu and Yi so lofty,
Like the majestic rivers Chu and Sz.
Toward him we aim and would reach his virtues,
And would have his illimitable ever flowing and en-
riching graces.
Oh! how refulgent are the offerings,
How very bright.
To him the transformer of mankind,
To him the nurturer of all our colleges.

The Outlook for Palestine.

Dr. H. P. Mendes, the famous rabbi, in the *Jewish Chronicle* magnifies the coming restoration of the Jews to their own land as a prophetic certainty. He sets forth the desirableness of the land as a possession, its ancient fertility, and its capacity for sustaining a large population. He then refers to the boundaries of the true promised land as much broader than Palestine, being 400 miles long and 1,100 broad. See Joshua 1: 4.

Then he proceeds to show the importance of such a possession, and in substance says:

First, look at its geographical position as a trade center. Imagine Canada and the United States with \$26,000,000, the given population for Asia. Imagine South America with 307,400,000, the given population of Europe. Add the millions of Africa, estimated at 206,000,000. Imagine next Central America with the milder climate of Palestine, and the supply and demand between North and South America, with all these millions of people with wants to be supplied, passing through, as must be when North and South America are connected by rail! Would not Central America offer brilliant promises for business purposes?

Just so Palestine. Railroad communication with Africa, Asia and Europe must pass through this "promised land." The Euphrates Valley road, connecting the European system of railways with India and the further East, will also roll trade into the confines of our land. History will only repeat itself. For in the days of Solomon, as Dean Milman points out, the five great caravan and trading lines of the ancient world converged in Palestine, and hence the national prosperity so great that "silver was in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance."

A common idea is that the Restoration means that all Hebrews must go back to Palestine. Dr. Mendes thinks all will not return, but some will stay, and engage in prosperous business among gentle nations. "And their seed shall be among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Isa. lxi, 9. Or again, "I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Jer. iii: 14. However, as soon as business possibilities are visible, the Hebrews will be ready enough to return to Palestine. Every day brings them nearer. Long years may pass first, perhaps even centuries. At this moment, he thinks, only decades and not centuries are to pass away before this Restoration becomes a fact. The Eastern question is one of absorbing interest. National common sense has already suggested that the only way to calm the jealousy of the great powers as to Syria, which all of them want, is to make it a neutral State; then give it in charge of the Jews, who are peaceful and able to develop business possibilities.

But, Dr. Mendes adds, "Palestine is not desired by us simply as a national home, but on account

of what it involves. First, the establishment of a respected court of arbitration for the settlement of international and such like disputes, thus causing war to cease, Isa. ii: 4. Second, an evidencing of a religionizing religion, a religion which shall not be a conventionality, so that no more shall we see how these Christians do not love one another, or how orthodox Jews are often most unorthodox, and reformed Jews sadly need reforming. For the expectation of a better moral tone in the world see Isa. xi: 10 or Jer. xxxi: 34.

"In short to sum up what we mean by our restoration to Palestine, we mean the institution of universal peace and universal brotherhood, and, of course, universal happiness. This will be not simply a consolation for the Jews, or the consolation of Zion, so long bereaved of her children; but the consolation of the world after all the snobbing and shrieking which history's page records of each and every nation."

Missionary Review.

Amusement in the Churches.

Rev. Dr. Archibald C. Brown of London has written a timely protest against the "Devil's Mission of Amusement in the churches," a protest very much needed in these days of restlessness and self-indulgence, when there seems to be an insatiate desire for entertainment manifested by the large majority of professing Christians, and when this element enters so largely into its work for the unconverted. He says:

"An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross, so brazen in its impudence, that the most short-sighted of spiritual men can hardly fail to notice it. During the past few years it has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil.

"Providing recreation for the people will soon be looked upon as a necessary part of Christian work and as binding upon the Church of God, as though it were a divine command, unless some strong voices be raised which will make themselves heard. It is only during the past few years that amusement has become a recognized weapon of our warfare, and developed into a mission. There has been a steady down grade in this respect.

"All this is terribly sad, and the more so because truly gracious souls are being led away by the specious pretext, that it is a form of Christian

work. They forget that a seemingly beautiful angel may be the devil himself, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." 2 Cor. xi: 14.

"My first contention is, that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in Holy Scripture as one of the functions of the Church. If it be a part of the church's work, surely we may look for some promise to encourage her in the toilsome task. Where is it? That which has no authority from Christ, no provision made for it by the Spirit, no promise attached to it by God, can only be a lying hypocrite when it lays claim to be "a branch of the work of the Lord."

"But again. Providing amusement for the people is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all His apostles.

"As none will question that He is to be the worker's model, let us gaze upon Him. How "In answer to John's question, "Art thou He that should come?" He replies—'Go and show John these things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are risen up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. There is no item in the catalogue after this sort 'and the careless are amused, and the perishing are provided with innocent recreation.'

"When many of His disciples went back because of the searching nature of His preaching I do not find there was any attempt to increase a diminished congregation by resorting to something more pleasant to the flesh. I do not hear Him saying, 'We must keep up the gatherings anyway; so run after those friends, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service to-morrow. Something very short and attractive; with little, if any, preaching. To-day was a service for God, but to-morrow we will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it, and have a happy hour. Be quick, Peter: we must get the people somehow; if not by gospel, then by nonsense.' No, this was not how He argued. Gazing in sorrow on those who could not bear the word, He simply turns to the twelve and asks, 'Will ye also go away?'

"Jesus pitied sinners; pleaded with them; sighed over them; warned them; and wept over them; but never sought to amuse them.

"How did the apostles carry on their mission work. Anything approaching the worldly footing of to-day is conspicuous by its absence. The early

evangelists had boundless confidence in the power of the gospel and employed no other weapon.

"The charge brought against the apostles by the members of the Council was 'Ye have filled Jerusalem with *your doctrine*.' Not much chance of this charge being brought against modern methods. The description of their work is, 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' Then, if they, 'ceased not' from this, they had no time for arranging for entertainments; they gave themselves continually 'to the ministry of the word.'

"The congregations in those days did not expect anything but the word of the Lord, for Cornelius says to Peter, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.'

"Lastly. The mission of amusement utterly fails to effect the desired end among the unsaved; but it works havoc among the young converts. Were it a success, it would be none the less wrong. Success belongs to God; faithfulness to His instructions to me. But it is not. Test it even by this and it is a contemptible failure. Let that be the method which is answered by fire, and the verdict will be 'The preaching of the word, that is the power.'

"Let us see the converts who have been first won by amusement. Let the harlot and the drunkard to whom a dramatic entertainment has been God's first link in the chain of their conversion stand forth. Let the careless and the scoffers who have ceased to thank God that the church has relaxed her spirit of separation and met them halfway in their worldliness, speak and testify. Let the husbands, wives, and children, who rejoice in a new holy home through 'Sunday Evening Lectures on social questions' tell out their joy. Let the weary heavy-laden souls who have found peace through a concert, no longer keep silent. Let the men and women who have found Christ through the reversal of apostolic methods declare the same, and show the greatness of Paul's blunder when he said, 'I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' There is neither voice nor any to answer. The failure is on a par with the folly, and as huge as the sin. Out of thousands with whom I have personally conversed, the mission of amusement has claimed no convert. Though I have never seen a sinner saved, I have seen any number of

backsliders manufactured by this new departure.

"Let the church again confront the world; tes-

tify against it; meet it only behind the cross; and, like her Lord, she shall overcome, and, with Him, share the victory.

✻ Missionary • Intelligence • ✻

A letter just received from Miss K. C. Kinney gives further particulars of the movements of the young lady missionaries who went out from us in October. Upon landing in Yokohama they re-assembled together for several days. A jin-riksha ride was given them around the bluff to view the bay. It seemed to them like going round Jericho and many of the promises given in the 1st chapter of Joshua, kept coming to Miss Kinney's mind, which she claimed for her future work in Japan. She describes the people as being kind, gentle and industrious. She saw no loafers, and neatness and order prevail. Almost every child old enough to walk has a baby strapped upon its back, and they are as happy in this taking care of it all day long as if they were playing with dolls. She says the climate is trying to weak lungs and she feels the need of drawing continually on the life of Christ for her body, but is conscious of being filled and satisfied according to her need and fills riches in glory. She has taken a class of eight Japanese girls to teach Bible-history. They are taking up 1st Samuel, and as they understand English quite well it is delightful work. Dear Mrs. Pierson has taken her right into her heart and is like a mother to her. Miss Kinney has begun to study the language. One dear girl in Mrs. Pierson's school has accepted the Fold-fold Gospel, and is praying the Lord to help Miss Kinney to speak the language very soon. Her letter is full of hopefulness and strong faith for the completion of the work given her to do in Japan.

It has been boldly stated in the Roman Catholic convention at Baltimore, that America is just the country for the propagation of Roman religion, and there is little doubt that all which popish craftiness can do toward bringing this land wholly under the control of the papal see, will be done to bring about that result. There are 350,000 French Roman Catholics in New England, and their numbers are being constantly increased by immigration from Canada. Roman Catholic influence is working industriously in many directions, and there is a real danger threatening the country from it.

The new government in Brazil is being rapidly established. It has taken the name of the United States of Brazil. Its size is nearly that of the United States of North America. The right of suffrage has been extended to all persons who can read and write. This makes the country practically an aristocracy, as a large part of the population are totally uneducated. There are 12 millions of people in the land, and only 200,000 of them can vote by this law. There are very many liberated slaves in the country besides Indians and mixed races. The opportunities for study, however, are good, and it is hoped that the new law in reference to voting will encourage education.

A convention for the promotion of holiness and Divine healing, was held in Bethel Chapel, Pitts-

delphia, from November 12th to 15. The meetings were well attended. Many were anointed for healing, and the wonder-working power of the Lord was marvelously displayed. Some came with crutches and went away without them, some who had been seriously ill for thirty-eight years were instantly healed. One lady rose from her sick bed where she had lain for a year and came to the meeting leaning on the arm of her mother. She was instantly healed, and ran home alone to tell her friends what Jesus had done for her. It seemed like a Pentecostal outpouring of the spirit. Many sinners were converted and many believers entered into the deeper life of faith.

Since publishing an article on "Jerusalem" in the Alliance of October 4th, we are glad to learn of several Americans who are doing mission work in Palestine. A returned missionary speaks of several, holding perhaps somewhat peculiar views, who are called "Americans on the wall" from the part of the city in which they are laboring. They are doing an earnest work in Jerusalem. A correspondent also writes of three American women of education and culture, members of the Society of Friends, who have charge of a mission station at Ramallah about ten miles north of Jerusalem. The work consists of a "Girls' Training Home," a hospital, a dispensary, and several day schools.

The great district of Soudan, just South of the Great Desert in Africa, is practically untouched by mission workers. It is an uncivilized and almost an unknown region. The Rev. H. Gratton Guinness of England has been the means under God of organizing a Pioneer Mission to that land which will make Monrovia, Liberia, the base of their operations and from there work into this neglected region. Many of its workers will come from our Western States, particularly Kansas and Nebraska. A Missionary Training Institute has been opened, partly to further this work in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The instruction given will be principally Bible study. Dr. Guinness has taken a house in Monrovia for the use of the Soudan missionaries.

An expedition in charge of grading and laying the rails of the first division of the Congo railroad left Antwerp on October 10th. The ground has been already surveyed. This is said to be the most difficult division of the whole road. It runs from Matadi to Palaballa. A second expedition will sail some time in November.

The Natives of Bengal have a habit of making rosaries by stringing the petals of a flower upon a cord and counting their prayers as they say them upon them. As the prayers are finished these fragrant rosaries are cast upon the river to float down to the sea. Bathing in the sacred Ganges is good to wash away sins as well as dirt. Hence all along the eastern shore steps are constructed for the penitent to go down into

the river to wash away his guilt. If a too-familiar crocodile chances to snap away his leg during his penitential ablutions, what matter! Better to lose a leg than not to lose one's sins.

There is a large emigration from the land of Syria, principally to the United States, but also to Egypt, Australia, and to many of the English colonies. From twenty to twenty-five thousand have gone in the past two years, and the tide is still going out at the rate of several hundreds a month. They come from the finest families of the country. The reason is the oppressive measures of the government, and the feeling of hopelessness in regard to any better state of affairs under the present rule. They leave the people behind to bear heavier burdens because of their absence. Taxes are fixed according to the population of the villages. If the decrease amounts, as it does in some cases to the loss of two-thirds of the inhabitants, the whole amount of taxation has to be made up by those remaining in the village. Such is the mercy and justice of the Moslem rule!

Thibet is said to be not open to missions, yet the Moravians are doing mission work there, and have made a grammar and dictionary of the language. Three provinces of China, Hu-nan, Kuang-si and Sing Kiang, have no missionary in them. No work has been done in Thibet from the China side, probably because of the opposition of Thibet to such work. There lies a vast sterile region called K'o-Su-Nor between it and the densely populated regions of China. The large district known as Chinese Turkistan, an immense area, but thinly settled as compared with the rest of China, also has no missionary.

Protestant missions in Turkey have two very difficult tasks before them. One is to reform the Oriental church, which has fallen far below its original simplicity and power. The other is to meet and conquer Mohammedanism through the Spirit of God. Neither is an easy task. One reason the Moslems have so little faith in Christianity is because they know nothing of its power from the specimens of it they have seen. No land probably presents such a union of gigantic difficulties as this one. The missionaries there are almost entirely Americans and the work they have done, particularly in the educational line, has been marvellous. There are 10,000 Protestants in the Empire. Although the church membership includes only 65,000, yet this is being increased at the rate of fifteen hundred a year. Six colleges have been established with 1,300 students. Beside these colleges there are 700 schools under mission care, in which 40,000 children are being educated. Besides all the branches of an ordinary common school education, the Bible is taught so thoroughly that it is not an uncommon thing for a class to be able to repeat the whole four of the Gospels from memory.

Sunday School Lessons.

Lesson XI. 1 King's xi. 4-13. Dec. 15, 1899.

SOLOMON'S FALL.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. x. 12.

INTERVENING HISTORY.

Solomon had now been reigning from 30 to 35 years, and was over 50 years of age. He was within 5 or 10 years of his death at the time of this lesson. A description is given of his great wealth, and the importation of horses and chariots from Egypt since the last lesson. Many things had conspired to turn his heart from the Lord. The chief of these was his love for many strange women. Polygamy was allowed among the ancient Hebrews, and the king of course wished to have a larger harem than any of his subjects. His 700 wives were probably daughters of tributary chiefs, given as hostages for the continued subjection of their fathers. The concubines were legal wives but held a lower position. The chief or first wife did not regard these with much jealousy, as they were all subordinate to herself and looked up to her with submission. The influence which these wives exerted over their husband was not small. To-day in the East their seductive power is recognized as being very great.

Polygamy was probably not the only element in Solomon's downfall. Through these wives he became tolerant of and finally a partaker in idolatrous observances. His ambition, his wealth, the flattery he received, his love of pleasure, even his love of wisdom all contributed to his downfall.

THE LESSON.

I. The Folly and Sin of Solomon.

The evil influence of his heathen wives seems to have taken years to accomplish its full result. It acted like a slow poison and he was an old man before he was fully turned by it from God. There is no power so much to be dreaded as that which steals upon us secretly and has us in its clutches before we are fairly aware of its presence. It is not to be wondered at that being surrounded by 1,000 designing women, Solomon should insensibly be turned by them away from God. There is perhaps no part of the character that needs more careful guarding than those impulses which render a young person susceptible to influences from the other sex. Under God's directing hand they may be turned into channels of blessing, but if allowed to hold unrestrained sway over the nature, they will surely drag it down into beastly degradation and fatal apostasy from God. Solomon's sin undoubtedly consisted not only in allowing his heathen wives to have altars to their gods in very sight of the temple, but in bowing down himself and worshipping their idols of wood and stone. Asherah (Astarte) was the female deity of the Phenicians as Baal was the male deity. This worship was accompanied with impure rites. Milcom (Moloch) was the god of the Ammonites. The worship of this god consisted in offering up human sacrifices to it, especially the burning alive of little children. Chemosh was the god of Moab, and was probably worshipped in a similar manner to Moloch. These altars were reared on the Mt. of Olives and the place is still known as the Mt. of Offense.

II. The Punishment of Sin.

God was not a silent spectator of the folly and sin of his child. Twice he had appeared to him with promises and warnings. The anger He is described as feeling caused in any sense he called human passion. God is ever calm. His unyielding aversion to sin is here represented, and was expressed to Solomon, together with the Divine displeasure to him, the sinner. This message was probably carried by the prophet Ahijah. That God had become displeased with one whom he had formerly loved, does not imply change on the part of God. Solomon had changed, and the gross insult he had offered to the covenant God of his fathers could not but meet with a terrible judgment. Yet this judgment was not given until after God had tried to restrain him from his evil course. (1 King's 8: 14; 9: 6.) It was tempered too with mercy for David's sake. But the blow at last fell and Solomon must have felt it keenly. It is harder to

have suffering come to others for our sin than to bear its consequences alone ourselves. Solomon was proud of his glorious country, and it was no light punishment to know that on his account it should be rent asunder. But for David's sake the stroke would have been more severe. Many evil consequences are averted from communities and from individuals, because of the sterling Christian qualities of some dear child of God. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to God and the service of the temple at Jerusalem, and they were joined by many pious Israelites when the rupture finally took place.

LESSONS.

1. Remember that temptations come at all times of life, and need to be ever watched against.
2. Understand God's thought in connection with marriage and be careful how you go against it.
3. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
4. See the danger of yielding to idolatry to-day, and setting up the divinities of lust, of power, of learning, of self-indulgence in any of its forms.
5. Learn the goodness of God in putting up barriers to keep us from destruction.
6. Let the terrible consequences, our sin will bring to others, be a warning against committing it.
7. Remember that, though God is tender and merciful, he is also just and will by no means pardon the guilty.

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